MUSEUM ON MAIN STREET
A Museum Of County Life
Ann Arbor, Michigan

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Museum on Main Street • *A Museum of County Life*

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SNEAK PREVIEW OF THE MUSEUM ON MAY 23RD

We are ready to show off the Society's restoration of the 1830s Kellogg-Warden House. You, your family and friends are invited.

The Committee to Open the Museum has been hard at work planning for this great event. By May the building's restoration will be complete, although the exhibits will take until September.

So, we are pleased to invite you all to a ***"SNEAK PREVIEW"*** reception on Sunday afternoon, May 23, 1999, from 2 to 5 p.m. At 2:30 we will have a 'ribbon cutting' ceremony. We are inviting the mayors of the towns in Washtenaw County; Ann Arbor's Parks & Recreation Department staff, as well as the presidents of local historical societies to join us in this celebration.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!

An invitation card for you, your family and friends will be enclosed in the April *Impressions*. Please do come and see and celebrate our restored building.

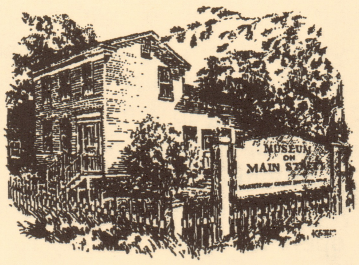
To ease parking, we plan to have vans and station wagons, driven by WCHS members, continuously circle the route between the Ann-Ashley Parking Structure and our museum. Guests may choose to park in the structure and either walk to 500 North Main Street or catch a ride in one of the vans

Refreshments will be served. The exhibit committee plans to temporarily showcase some of WCHS's prize artifacts. Then, in September 1999, the exhibit committee will have regular exhibits completed and in place. At that time, September, we are planning a pancake breakfast/brunch followed by a Grand Opening Ceremony in the afternoon. More information about that event will be forthcoming.

The Washtenaw County Historical Society is grateful for the support of our members, and those who have donated goods, expertise, and services to this wonderful project. We look forward to greeting all of you at the celebrations in both May and September. We also look forward to serving our members, school children, members of other historical societies and the general public with our displays of artifacts from the past.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Sunday • May 23, 1999
2:00 to 5:00 PM



WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY - Founded December 17, 1857 MARCH 1999

WASHTENAW IMPRESSIONS

RUTHRUFF FAMILY SAW HARD TIMES ON ANN ARBOR'S WALL STREET DURING PRE-, POST-CIVIL WAR PERIODS

The house which WCHS is working to turn into a museum of county life was home to several families over its 150 some years on Ann Arbor's Wall Street before it was moved to 500 North Main Street in 1990.

The Kellogg's, millers from New York State, are thought to have built the house about the time Michigan became a state in 1837. Ethan Warden was their brother-in-law. By the 1890s the Greiner family lived there.

Laura Greiner Marz, who lived there with her husband, John Marz, from about 1915, is believed to be the last surviving member of the family. She died in 1988.

Susan Wineberg, WCHS president and a historical researcher, uncovered much about the Kelloggs, Warden, Greiners and Marzes. Through a serendipitous series of events Karen O'Neal has learned more about the Kellogg's through a Kellogg family researcher, David Oakley of Chatham, Massachusetts on Cape Cod.

But there was almost nothing about the Ruthruffs who lived there for 25-30 years except the name Samuel Ruthruff living at 1015 Wall Street in early city directories.

SAMUEL RUTHRUFF (1801-1877)

He and his family lived in the museum house for 25-30 years beginning in 1853.

A fortunate query by the editor to the late Carol Freeman, Dixboro historian and author of Of Dixboro: Lest We Forget, was the key to a treasure trove of information.

Samuel Ruthruff's son, George and his wife Addie, bought a house in Dixboro in 1881 which Carol mentioned in her book. Also, George's grandson, Rob-

Continued on page 5 and 6.

INTERIOR RESTORATION CONTINUES APACE, LIGHTS OPERABLE, MUSEUM OPENING COMMITTEE AT WORK

Slowly but surely. The interior restoration of the Museum Building continues apace. As of this writing the toilet has been installed into the handicap-accessible restroom and the tile floor is complete.

Custom-made cabinetry is being constructed by our carpenter Lee Rohrer and will be installed soon. Lee will also be finishing up various other carpentry tasks throughout the house once the restroom is completed.

Let there be light! There are finally operable lights in every room of the Museum Building. This has been a long time coming and is greatly welcomed! New switches have been installed and we await the arrival of new fixtures to make our little museum building 'glow.' A special thank you to Tom Stanton of Modern Electric.

Roses are ... old-fashioned! Our new garden co-ordinator, Pat Thompson, tells me that she is taking a Master Gardening class, which she will complete in a few months. You may be familiar with her home and garden at

Continued on page 5.

SEE EARLY IMAGES OF GREAT LAKES COUNTRY MARCH 21 AT CLEMENTS

Brian Dunnigan, curator of maps at Clements Library will show "Early Images of the Great Lakes Country" at the Sunday, March 21 WCHS meeting at Clements Library, 909 South University Avenue.

Besides maps he will show other drawings which will give an idea of what the area looked like when the first European settlers arrived. They will be selected from the library collection that depicts the region from about 1612 to the 1870s.

WCHS HAS 41% OF POINTS NEEDED FOR NEXT GOAL

WCHS's new goal is to collect 19,125 Bill Knapp's Restaurant points to buy archival storage materials to safely store photographs. Thanks to members and friends we already have 8,872 points, **41% OF OUR GOAL**.

Anyone may ask for the yellow points slip from the cashier each time. One point is given for each dollar spent. Please give or send them to Alice Ziegler, 537 Riverview Dr., Ann Arbor, MI 48104.

SNEAK PREVIEW MUSEUM ON MAIN STREET

500 North Main St.

2-5 P.M.
Sunday • May 23,1999

2:30 P.M.
Ribbon-cutting ceremony

See the restored 1830s Kellogg-Warden House on its way to becoming a museum of county life.

MASTODONS, INDIANS, TRAPPERS, PIONEERS FOLLOWED SAME ROUTE

US-12 has many names—it is called the Sauk Trail, the Chicago Road, Michigan Avenue, Gladys Saborio of Saline told the WCHS audience.

She is working to give it another—Michigan Heritage Highway.

In Michigan it runs all the way from Detroit to New Buffalo on Lake Michigan at the Indiana border, she noted.

A retired school teacher, Mrs. Saborio became interested in the historic route while earning a degree in historic preservation from Eastern Michigan University in 1994.

"In order to have it designated we need to talk about history along the highway and we need communities along the highway to send resolutions of endorsement.

"We now have resolutions of support from 22 communities that stretch across the lower tier of eight counties. I believe the whole stretch of Washtenaw County now has signed resolutions of support.

"When we talk about this road, it is not exactly the highway but rather the corridor through which this road passes as a means of transport.

The earliest indication of the use of the corridor was found just west of the City of Saline where U-M paleontologists have unearthed a mastodon trail, the longest mastodon trailway ever found, suggesting the game animals were using the corridor over 10,000 years ago.

"There were some bones found and when they went out to investigate they found tracks where these animals had found this corridor about 500 feet off the highway.

"It was a seasonal migration route and part of a longer highway that runs from the Atlantic Ocean all the way to the Pacific Ocean.

"What the highway represents to us and the story we want to tell is that it is the story of transportation on the North American continent.

"First there were animals, then native Americans and in this area French trappers.

"But what really opened US-12 to settlement, what brought families here, was the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825.

Photos by Gladys Saborio

Observation towers along US-12 in Irish Hills.

"With the opening of the canal settlers were able to reach Michigan Territory by water and they came by 100s and 1,000s to Monroe and Detroit, then settled along US-12.

"When we talk about this highway after the opening of the Erie Canal we are talking about how transportation developed and what kind of artifacts are left.

"The stagecoach era was from 1825 -1860. Communities developed about 15 miles apart across the lower tier of counties, small towns like Saline, Clinton, Jonesville, Allen and Quincy.

"US-12 was only the second highway in the United States to receive federal funding. The first was Route 40, the American Road.

"In 1824 one of our congressmen, Fr. Gabriel Richard, pressed Congress to have this highway surveyed.

"Congress allowed $3,000 and sent Orange Risdon and a team of surveyors out to survey the highway. The surveyors thought they would lay out a nice straight line. They did about one mile and realized the $3,000 wasn't going to stretch unless they gave up the idea of the straight road.

"Orange Risdon owned land in Saline and that was the beginning of Saline. Moses Allen who worked for Risdon settled a little farther on at Allen and did the same thing.

"Also in White Pigeon and clear across people who worked with a surveyor picked out a nice piece of property and platted little towns.

"There were at first two land offices in Michigan—Monroe and Detroit. But when you got out in Hillsdale and Branch Counties it was too far to go so the government opened a land office in White Pigeon.

"In less than three years time all the land west of the meridian line, which runs up about through Jackson in the Lower Peninsula, and west of Jackson to far north of Grand Rapids was sold in the White Pigeon land office.

"That meant all the land around Grand Rapids, Battle Creek, Kalamazoo and Muskegon was sold out of that land office. The office is still there, operated as a museum.

"We can see that land speculation was nothing new. People weren't just buying 100 acres of farmland; they were definitely out buying lots of land.

"A few years ago they had a privy dig and they came up with a lot of artifacts. Privy digs are one of the ways historians document what went on in certain places. They were the landfills of the

TOWER, SPITE TOWER OVERLOOK IRISH HILLS

A familiar sight in the Irish Hills is the two observation towers standing side by side. The story is that the property line between two farms passed between them, Mrs. Saborio said. Someone wanted to build a tower and asked the first farmer for permission. He was refused.

The second farmer gave permission. The tower was built and doing a good business. When the first farmer saw this he decided to build a tower too, but a little taller. Then the second farmer made his tower higher and so on until the state told them not to make them any taller—it wouldn't be safe.

The second tower is called the spite tower.

past. Anything that was broken—you threw it down the privy. Pottery and clay pipes were the sort of thing found.

"They have quite a lot of artifacts on display in the museum and they put up a privy with a traditional crescent moon cut out up over the outdoor site of the dig.

"In the early era this was a major stage route between Detroit and Chicago.

"Left along the way are buildings that were used as taverns." She showed the Davenport House on Evans Lake that started serving stage passengers in 1839 in the Irish Hills that still serves as a restaurant today. Another is the original Walker Tavern, operated as a historic park by the State of Michigan. It had only a one-room loft with all sharing the same room.

Across the road is the brick Walker Tavern. It had a dining room and private bedrooms and a ballroom on the third floor.

"The Clinton Inn/Eagle Tavern still exists—Henry Ford came and took it to Greenfield Village in 1927.

"Some of the buildings we see along the highway are old grist mills because some of the first buildings settlers built were mills because they needed to grind grain for flour and saw boards for construction.

"Ford modified an old mill at Saline (Weller's today) to be part of his village industries. A mill in Buchanan still has a working water wheel. You can visit there and buy pancake flour.

"Some of the early housing from the pre-Civil War era is of the Greek Revival style. It came to us from New York basically. Many fine examples of these buildings are left along the way.

"The railroads came before the Civil War but came to dominance around the era of the Civil War. Eventually it turned out that the stagecoach is not as efficient a way to travel as the railroads as we all know so the railroad became the dominant feature through this corridor.

"Many towns were on the railroad, some just because the railroad was there. But with US-12 the railroad basically followed the corridor where the road had gone. In some places the railroad runs almost on the pavement.

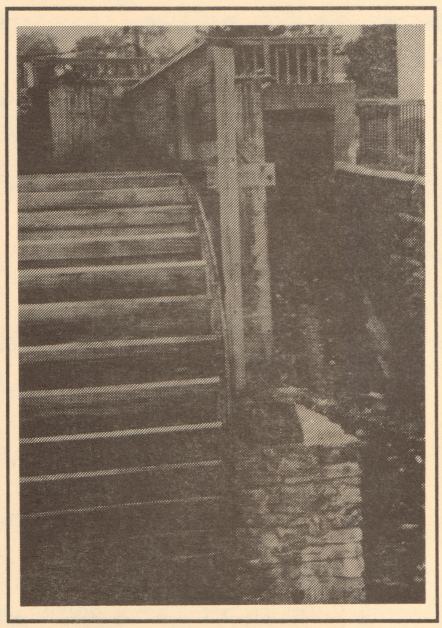
United States Land Office in White Pigeon, Michigan, now a museum

"The Niles, Michigan Central Depot was designed by the same architects as the Ann Arbor station—the Detroit firm of Spier and Rohn.

"The railroad not only gave people an opportunity to travel, it enabled farmers to get their goods to market and import goods from more distant towns. The towns began to thrive."

She showed a picture of the Clinton Woolen Mill, established in 1866, and noted Washtenaw County became one of the major sheep producing areas in the United States.

"The wool cloth produced in the Clinton mill was used for soldier's uniforms in World Wars I and II and the Spanish-American War, cloth for fire and police uniforms and eventually material for automobile upholstery. It closed in 1957.


Working water wheel in mill in Buchanan, Michigan. Mills to grind grain for flour and saw wood for construction were high priority of settlers.

"Not only small one-room schoolhouses grew up along US-12 but also Eastern Michigan University and some libraries just off the highway. (She showed libraries at Bronson and Ypsilanti as well as beautiful homes.)

"There are farms all along the highway including just up the road here in the city limits of Saline. They are going to use that one as a museum to interpret farm life in the first half of the 20th century.

NOW THAT'S DOING REAL LAND OFFICE BUSINESS

There were at first only two land offices in Michigan—Monroe and Detroit. But when you got out in Hillsdale and Branch Counties it was so far to go that the government opened a land office in White Pigeon.

In less than three years time all the land west of the meridian line, which runs up about through Jackson in the Lower Peninsula and to the north of Grand Rapids was sold in the White Pigeon land office.

That included all the land around Grand Rapids, Battle Creek, Kalamazoo and Muskegon. The office is still there, operated as a museum.

"We can see that land speculation was nothing new. People weren't just buying 100 acres of farm land, they were definitely out buying lots of land."

"Again, transportation changed with the automobile. The automobile era was from 1945-present. Highway improvement was important—Michigan Avenue was paved in 1924."

She showed a camel back bridge at Mottville over the St. Joseph River and noted that that style of bridge is found only in Michigan and Ontario. The State of Michigan took a leading role in developing standardized plans for

bridges. That was one of them.

"State police posts were built along the highway in the 1930s. She showed posts at White Pigeon and Niles.

"The road has changed several times. Some might remember when US-12 was US-112 before the opening of I-94. Old US-12 dipped down into Indiana by just a few feet. Michigan wanted it all in Michigan. They also straightened out some curves on old US-112.

"Of course, Michigan led the nation and probably the world in rest areas." She showed "the first tourist lodge ever built in the country at New Buffalo in the 1930s" where tourists could go to the rest room and pick up some travel literature.

"The tourist lodge, that looked like a home, is still there. It was considered comfortable then to go to places that looked like a home. Another thing you might think of that looked like home were the old Howard Johnson Restaurants."

The world's oldest Hudson dealership in Ypsilanti is now operated as a museum."

She showed early tourist motor courts, cabins and motels as well as old gas stations that can be seen in the Irish Hills and Mottville areas.

She showed a beautiful hotel in downtown Niles that has a telephone switchboard that still works and an old telephone booth in the lobby. "There is talk of reviving the hotel."

"Al Capone and Eleanor Roosevelt are on a long list of people who have stayed there.

"Tourism was important. People had money. People working in factories had a 40-hour workweek, paid vacations.

A man who had prospered came back to his Irish Hills homestead and to entertain some of his friends, he built a rathskeller in the side of a hill. It is topped by two "trees" made of molded concrete. He also had 17 small decorative bridges built on his property. It is now known as McCourtie Park at Somerset Center.

"Al Capone and the Purple Gang used the route to deliver liquor to Chicago. They liked to smoke, they liked to drink, and they liked to play cards. There are many Al Capone stories along the way."

"There is also a new shrine to St. Joseph in the Irish Hills.

"With our chain restaurants and other businesses we are building 'Anywhere, USA.' Some of us are concerned about that. We are trying to get communities along US-12, when they do their planning to take into consideration those historical artifacts that will tell us what the history of transportation along it is.

"What can we do about the Clinton Woolen Mill? What can we do about the old stage stops? That is what we are doing right now—we are getting together two representatives from each of the eight counties. We want to make sure that what the Michigan Department of Transportation is doing coincides with what the community wants.

"When we get our designation from the State of Michigan we will go to the Federal Scenic Byways Program. We would like to get status as an All-American Road.

Mrs. Saborio is the organizer and president of the US-12 Sauk Trail Heritage Route, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and she sits on the Board of the Automotive National Heritage Area to be run by the National Park service in southeast Michigan.

INTERIOR RESTORATION...

Continued from page 1.

839 W. Huron at Seventh, a very busy intersection where it gets noticed a lot.

She has been reading up on historic gardens and plans to continue landscaping our house according to our master plan, which calls for a turn of the century garden. Pat has also agreed to join our Board of Directors and will be a very welcome addition. Anyone wishing to contribute to the garden can contact her at 663-8976.

A stitch in time. There is still time to sign the signature quilt although it is being quilted at the moment. For a $20 donation your name and that of your family, can be a part of history. Please contact Karen O'Neal at 665-2242 to get details.

Party time. The Museum Opening Committee is working hard on the opening day festivities to be held the weekend of May 22-23. Pauline Walters has begun coordinating the calendar and the various tasks that need to be done. Anyone wishing to help that weekend either with food, being a host/hostess, parking cars, or being a greeter please contact her at 663-2379.

Susan Wineberg, President

RUTHRUFF FAMILY...

Continued from page 1.

ert Ruthruff, had called on Carol when he and his wife moved to Ann Arbor in the 1970s after he retired.

But more than that, Carol referred us to Grace Judson who had a copy of the History of the Ruthrauffs, 1560-1925 by Mary Ruthrauff Hoover which she graciously lent us. Her late husband, Nathan, was descended from Samuel Ruthruff. Recently, Mrs. Judson was able to put us in touch with Don Ruthruff of Montrose, Colorado, who is researching the family.

So who was Samuel Ruthruff?

He was a Washtenaw pioneer who had lived quietly with his family in Superior Township since 1837. He had followed his father-in-law, Michael Frain, from Seneca County, New York State. Frain's Lake, east of Dixboro, was named for Michael who settled in Superior in 1835.

Up to 1850 Samuel's life seems to have proceeded quietly and normally if life with 13 children can be called quiet and normal. But the 1850s were a time of great upheaval in Samuel's life.

In August 1850, the census taker listed all 13 children as if at home. They ranged in age from 23 years to 11 months. A month later, Samuel's wife, Susannah, died at age 44. His father-in-law had died a few months earlier.

Samuel found a new wife--Miss Martha Wilcox--to help him care for his brood by April 1852 when he sold his farm for $1800.

On January 29,1853, he and Martha bought the Kellogg-Warden house on Wall Street in Ann Arbor with two lots for $600 from Dan Kellogg, executor of his father Charles Kellogg's estate.

We don't know how many Ruthruff children moved into the Wall Street house. It must have been crowded even if they didn't all move in. It seems likely some of the older ones had set out on their own by then. In fact, Daniel the third child, is said to have left home at age 14 (1843) and be living in Detroit under an assumed name.

The oldest daughter, Mary Elizabeth,19, married Freeman P. Galpin, a widower from Superior Township, in October 1853, a few months after Samuel moved to Wall Street.

Times were hard. The Panic of 1857 had personal meaning for Sam Ruthruff.

RUTHRUFF FAMILY SAW HARD TIMES ON ANN ARBOR'S WALL STREET ...

Continued from page 1 and 5.

He couldn't pay what he owed on the Wall Street property and the house was sold at public auction February 19,1857.

How then did Sam and his family occupy it as their home for 25-30 years?

Samuel's son-in-law, Freeman Galpin, successfully bid $552.23 for the house with two lots. A month later he bought two more adjacent lots to go with the first two. He paid James Gott, an attorney, $200 for the two lots.

What financial arrangements were made between Ruthruff and Galpin are not known but the Ruthruffs continued to live there.

The Galpins did not sell the house with four lots until April 16,1889, 12 years after Samuel Ruthruff died.

Why the Ruthruffs moved to town is uncertain. He had always been a farmer. In fact, a few months after they settled on Wall Street they bought 80 acres in Section 14 of Ann Arbor Township from Leander Sawyer for $1300. It was on Plymouth Road about a half mile east of Nixon Road.

But a few years later, Samuel had another financial reverse. His Ann Arbor Township farm was sold at a sheriff's sale, June 26,1862, to the high bidder, James Treadwell of Ann Arbor Township, for $1900.

The mortgage, first held by the Sawyers, passed through other hands until it was assigned to--who else--Freeman Galpin, the compassionate son-in-law who had saved the Ruthruff's home.

A year later, James and Eliza Treadwell sold the 80 acres to Galpin for $1,000. Three years later Galpin sold the east 40 acres to Gottfried D. Frederick. Samuel Ruthruff witnessed that deal.

With Samuel's losses and no occupation listed in the city directory one may wonder how the family made a living. Years later, in the 1890s, the Charles Greiner family apparently made a living from the four lots. He was listed in city directories as a gardener.

I suspect that the Ruthruffs, too, did a lot of gardening and they may have kept chickens, a cow, perhaps horses, even hogs. Life was simpler then--no plumbing or garbage pick-up. Garbage disposal then meant giving it to the hogs or chickens to pick over or composting it.

And gardens enriched with compost and manure would grow luxuriantly.

Professor Russell Bidlack, retired dean of the University of Michigan School of Library Science, quotes Andrew Ten Brook, one of the first U-M professors and sometime acting University president, saying of the 1840s, "We all then kept cows which ran at large and often strayed to the neighboring forests."

The 1881 county history says one of the first ordinances passed by the newly incorporated Village of Ann Arbor in 1834 was to prevent swine running at large. Be that as it may, the Village Council passed another such ordinance in 1847, but soon rescinded it according to an index of proceedings at Ann Arbor City Hall. (The actual minutes are missing.)

In the next decade, City Council again passed an ordinance to prevent hogs running at large and again rescinded it. Similar proposals to prevent horses and cattle running at large were passed, but after several protests, they too were rescinded.

Ann Arbor, 30 years after its founding, was apparently not ready for such niceties. Besides, it would do the owners out of free feed for their livestock and pasturing also kept the grass down. The luxury (or drudgery) of new-fangled lawn mowers was far in the future.

RESTORING OLD BOOKS WCHS APRIL 18 TOPIC

Jim Craven, conservator of books and manuscripts, will discuss his work and provide a tour of his restoration laboratory at the WCHS's April 18 meeting at Bentley Historical Library.

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WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

'IMAGES OF THE GREAT LAKES COUNTRY'

2 p.m. • Sunday
March 21, 1999

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